

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

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MAR 25 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Chinese Attitudes and Behavior Toward Insurgencies
in Southeast Asia

In order to obtain a sound basis for U.S. policies in Southeast Asia and China over the next five years, we need to obtain an analysis of Chinese attitudes and behavior toward Southeast Asian insurgencies.

We need a factual analysis of the details of Chinese support (money, training, and manpower) in the 1960's for insurgents in Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. Special emphasis should be placed on changes in, or the turning points of, Chinese support or involvement.

In analyzing these facts in terms of an overall interpretation of what they imply about the Chinese attitude and behavior toward Southeast Asian insurgencies, the following issues could be addressed:

-- SNIE 13-69 (March 6, 1969) described Chinese involvement in the Burmese insurgencies as a possible "indicator of trends in Peking's foreign policy." If this is true, what does the last year's experience in Burma suggest about these trends?

-- Contrasting Chinese involvement in the insurgencies in Thailand and Burma, what can be said about the degree to which Chinese involvement is deterred in Thailand by the U.S. commitment compared with Burma where there is no U.S. commitment? How has Chinese support in Thailand varied as U.S. involvement in Thailand has grown since 1962?

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MORI C03322685 pages 1-6, 10-11

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-- Contrasting Chinese and North Vietnamese involvements in Laos and Thailand, what can be said about the competitive or complementary nature of their objectives? Are there agreed spheres of influence and a division of labor, or is there competition? How does one account for the decline in support for the Thai insurgency since 1967?

-- What does the Chinese road in Laos imply about Chinese support for Southeast Asian insurgencies?

-- How has Chinese support for insurgents varied with government to government relations between Peking and Rangoon? Phnom Penh? Bangkok? Vientiane?

-- Does Chinese adherence to the Maoist principle of self-reliance limit Chinese support for Southeast Asian insurgencies? If so, how?

-- Do the Chinese support non-Communist as well as Communist insurgencies? If so, what are Chinese objectives, stated or implied?

These questions are illustrative. There may be others that provide a better insight into what Chinese objectives are served by supporting Southeast Asian insurgencies. The purpose of the analysis should be to develop that view or alternative views by working from the facts available on past and current Chinese involvement.

We need the results of this analysis by May 15, 1970. While I think the field should have an opportunity to contribute and comment, the time period is clearly too short to search out new facts. Rather, the emphasis should be on presenting those facts that are readily available within the intelligence community. If there are gaps in our knowledge, these can be filled in later.

(Signed) HENRY A. KISSINGER

Henry A. Kissinger

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From: Larry Lynn

SECRETStudy on Chinese Attitudes Toward Southeast Asian Insurgencies

Reasons for sticking to known facts and early deadline. We have already been into this subject to considerable depth. We know there are substantial data on these Chinese activities. Our first objective was to get the intelligence community to talk about these facts. Whatever the answer, this has to be the first step. More facts will not help if the intelligence analysts continue to ignore them and give us the conventional wisdom instead. Our first objective is methodological.

Little will be gained by launching an ambitious research expedition unless the intelligence community learns how to take the first few steps. This was learned from NSSM 38. The Cambodian Sanctuary fiasco is another example of the risks we run when we ask intelligence analysts to tell us what they think rather than what they know.

Reasons for leaving out Malaysia and Indonesia. We considered doing these countries and others, but excluded them. First, we felt that the more countries we include, the more likely it is that the intelligence community will fall back on generalizations and botch the job. We prefer a sampling approach. If the intelligence community did three countries (we asked for four) and did them well, we would know more than we have ever known about Chinese involvement.

We also ruled out other countries for more obvious reasons. We think we have asked some tough questions, most of which are related to the countries we specified (Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Burma). We reasoned that concentration on the few countries where these issues apply would be more productive than trying to consider a large number of countries that have nothing more in common than a Chinese-supported insurgency, past or present.

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TAB A.
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We felt that because Indonesia is off the mainland, Chinese objectives there may not apply to the mainland, where we have cause for real concern in the 1970s. Malaysia is not currently a very active Chinese account and hasn't been since the 1950s. We did not feel that much of current value could be gained by studying the 1950s. Nor did we believe that studying Malaysia in the 1960s would be worth the risk of further depreciating the analysis, considering that the Malaysian insurgents are now mostly located in Thailand and Chinese support for them would be analyzed in the Thailand study.

We had discussed all these issues and others with several individuals before we drafted the final memorandum. We informally asked INR and several analysts in CIA for their views on most of the questions, and they said they were excellent questions and should be answered. Dick Moorsteen, who is doing some work on China for Elliot Richardson, also looked at the questions and, besides saying we had upstaged him on part of his study, agreed fully with our approach. (At Moorsteen's suggestion we added the question on Chinese support for non-Communists insurgencies.)

RECOMMENDATION:

I have prepared two alternative memoranda. At Tab A is our original proposal with a new due date of May 15, 1970. At Tab B is a modified version that includes Malaysia and Indonesia, has a July 15, 1970 due date, and stipulates that the analysis is to be based on new facts as well as those presently available. I recommend you sign the memorandum at Tab A.

Enclosures

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-- Contrasting Chinese and North Vietnamese involvements in Laos and Thailand, what can be said about the competitive or complementary nature of their objectives? Are there agreed spheres of influence and a division of labor, or is there competition? How does one account for the decline in support for the Thai insurgency since 1967?

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These questions are illustrative. There may be others that provide a better insight into what Chinese objectives are served by supporting Southeast Asian insurgencies. The purpose of the analysis should be to develop that view or alternative views by working from the facts available on past and current Chinese involvement.

We need the results of this analysis by July 15, 1970.

Henry A. Kissinger

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INFORMATION

March 5, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Laurence E. Lynn, Jr. *fel*

SUBJECT: Chinese Attitudes and Behavior Toward Insurgencies
in Southeast Asia

The Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of a divergency of views on the Chinese attitude and behavior toward Southeast Asian insurgencies. This divergency has important implications for our Thailand policy and our general policy toward China and Southeast Asia.

After discussing the points of contention, I recommend that you ask Mr. Helms to initiate a study of the available facts on Chinese involvement in Southeast Asian insurgencies and present findings to you by April 15, 1970. At Tab A is a memo for Director Helms which I recommend you sign.

Problem

A major assumption underlying our policy in Southeast Asia and our general policies toward China is our view of the Chinese attitude and behavior toward Southeast Asian insurgencies.

Everyone can agree that the Chinese support Southeast Asian insurgencies as a means of expanding their political influence in an area over which they believe they should have big power dominance.

But there is serious disagreement over the practical implications of this broad Chinese attitude. At least two views have substantial support within the government:

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-- The Doctrinal View - One view, which can be labelled doctrinal, argues that Chinese support and involvement in Southeast Asia insurgencies is constrained both by their ideology and by their cautious approach to external matters.

Those who hold the doctrinal view argue that Chinese ideology places great emphasis on the Maoist principle of self reliance. Foreign insurgents must prove that they can go it alone. They must first achieve some measure of indigenous strength and political support before they can expect substantial Chinese support. Ideological support plus a few parsimonious handouts from China are all insurgents can expect until they prove their indigenous strength.

The doctrinal view also argues that the Chinese are preoccupied with the long-term task of governing China and wish to avoid major external burdens, especially a confrontation with big powers. This view dictates caution and suggests that Chinese support for insurgents will be restrained.

Thus, large-scale armed shipments and certainly the direct involvement of Chinese cadre as advisors or operatives in Southeast Asian insurgencies are unlikely. Whether or not insurgencies succeed will be determined more by indigenous conditions in Southeast Asian nations than by Chinese support.

-- The Expansionist View - The second view sees the Chinese as expansionists who will support Southeast Asia insurgents with abundant resources and even Chinese cadre, if there is some hope that they will be successful.

Therefore, the Chinese can be expected to place all the resources behind an insurgency that can be productively employed.

Whether one accepts either of these two views or another view of Chinese objectives in supporting insurgencies in Southeast Asia implies greatly different program requirements for Thailand, and more fundamentally, leads to dramatically different views on what we should expect to happen in Thailand in the next few years. For example, will Thailand be another Vietnam?

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Likewise, our view of wider policy alternatives in Asia -- for example, how we view broad policy alternatives such as the desirability of closer Sino-Thai relations -- is affected by this issue. The desired extent of our post-Vietnam base and force presence in Southeast Asia may also turn on the same issue.

There is a substantial body of facts available against which alternative views of Chinese objectives can be judged. For example, there is evidence on specific details of Chinese support (money, equipment, training, and cadre) in the 1960's for insurgents in Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia.

The memorandum for Helms at Tab A asks for an analysis of the facts available and what those facts suggest about Chinese objectives. The memorandum raises several issues which should be explored by the analysis. It does not hypothesize any general views on the assumption these should be developed from the analysis.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memorandum at Tab A.

Enclosure

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